

the beautiful boy standing before her, the small Arab
Sheed, still as a statue, by the side of his young master.
But royal dukes must never be surprised, & must
always be ready to receive visitors, & that without
asking questions. So it came to pass, that
Salad had a Hall Prince Pearlina, a chamber
in the palace. Although everyone wanted to know
where he came from & what he belonged to, & how
long he was going to stay, & where he was going to
next, nobody could ask a single question
for good manners' sake. After Princess
Helena, she took her delightful play-fellow without
even wanting to ask a question, & was the
happiest princess in Christendom.

In very earliest sunshine awoke princess Helena
next-morning, the morning after, to be sure,
Murs Gamel had overslept herself, & long
~~did it~~ had she to lie abed before her
nurs came to dress her. And then it was:
"Oh, nurs, did you ever see such a beautiful
prince? His name is prince Pearlina; he
told me so; didn't you see that great pearl
fastening his button? That's why he's prince
Pearlina. Oh, I hope he is coming to live
with us for ever ever!" So princess Helena
clasped her little hands tight & looked up as
if she were longing ever so, but all the same,
her tongue ran on without a moment's pause,
giving Murs Gamel nothing to answer, which
was perhaps as well as that good woman, &
all

all the ~~old servants~~ of the duke her at - her's
its end to know that Prince Reelin could do.
Princess Helena did not trouble herself in the
least about that matter, though she did run
on with -

"And, oh nurse, do you know he has no father?
He did not even know what a father was: & I
promised that I would give him mine.
But, nurse, can you give your father away,
can you have him all the time for yourself
just to come up if you hadn't given him
away at all?"

"What a queer child you are, my lady!"

"Oh nurse, that's just like you. Whenever
I want to know, you call me a queer child!
I told my father one day, but then he doesn't
tell me things. I think grown up big people
don't know little people's things."

"Well, now you have Prince Reelin, lady, &
perhaps he knows these queer things."

"Oh yes, I've been thinking for hours & hours,
hours; I thought you were never coming.
Nurse: but then I wanted all the time to
think what I should ask him first. But
as so many things, I don't know where to begin.
Do you think he is awake nurse?"

"Awake? yes; he's been up & out these three
hours, galloping off on that bonny little
black horse of his."

In answer to this, Prince Gamel sent on weary
the long plaid of ^{yellow} hair with careless fingers: but his
white shoulders began to work, & Helena threw
herself ^{across} her nurse's knees, with a sudden shudder.

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Others, between the sobbing nurse Gamal heard,
"No — will — never — come — back —
no — more!!"

It was none to little of hope, or of waiting to see, or
of how the duke would find him & bring him
back: the tears fell faster, & the sob came thicker,
until at last — that came quick pattering
a light horse carrying a light-rider that she had
heard for the first time yesterday amongst
the filly flowers!

And now there was a hurrying & hurrying
& bathing of eyes; there was not a minute to
lose, for who could tell, but he might be gone
again, he & Salado, before ever she got to him!
Poor nurse Gamal! she had rather a bad
time of it with her little mistress that morning!

All Day.

There he was, sure enough, sitting with her
father above the salt. The little girl came sidling
up the great hall rather shyly followed by her
nurse, & she curtsied to her father, & held up
her mouth to be kissed; & then she
curtsied to the boy visitor, who was not
shy at all, but was very glad to meet &
kiss his little friend of yesterday. A
company of him & all filled the hall, but not
much was said by the great people above the
salt. The duke was quietly watching the two
children, & you might see his eyes twinkle
now & then as he looked across to listen,
& the crowd's feet about the old captain's eyes
puckered

perched up he shows he was smiling, for you could not see his face smooth for beard & wrinkles. What amused the gentlemen was to see Helena's eyes fixed on her young companion, so that she nearly forgot to eat her breakfast, & would have forgotten it altogether if it had not been for Mrs Lammal who stood behind her lady's chair. As for him, he did not look at Helena at all after the first glad greeting. His eyes were roving up & down the long line of ~~servants~~ knights & squires & serving men who sat, each in his degree, down the long table. No sooner had Father Gilden said grace than, there he was by Estan's side, fingerling the hilt of his sword & asking a hundred questions in a breath, as to what battles the old man had fought, & what brave deeds that sword had done.

Now this was rather tedious; Helena, who was ever & in a princess, never thought of running after the boy; but that her very own playfellow should not play with her, was not to be thought of. She stood still then on the dais with her nurse behind her while all the people were filing out of the hall, but Estan saw the blue eyes glimmering & stepped across to her, the boy by his side.

"Well, my princess," said the old man fondly - there was nobody in the world for him to compare with Helena - & what was you going to do to amuse our visitor today?" Ah, that was as it should be: she could ~~scarcely~~ ^{scarcely} ~~hardly~~

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things, I have Reerlin to play with her all day long! And Esten got a kiss each - the reward he liked best.

"Oh, I want to show him everything I tell him everything! It will take us every day to do it all!"

Away the two went, hand in hand. First, there was a visit to the stable, where Isaph, her father's grey black mare, was admired; & then, Guinevere, her own snow-white pony, which reminded Helena to tell her guest ~~to~~ all about her own christening & the queen's visit - a story she had heard a hundred times from nurse Gamal - & how the Queen had sent her this lovely pony, with not a single coloured hair in coat or mane or tail, on her fifth birthday. And Guinevere came skimming up to her mistress, & kissed her for apples, & small such & such, that she did not hear Reerlin say, help to himself.

"I have seen the Queen. Someday I shall be her knight. & perhaps I shall die for her!" Then it was Salade's turn to be admired; she lay at his master's new friend with such soft wise dark eyes, that the little girl drew her arms round his neck & kissed his shiny black nose. Then Reerlin must needs put Salade a hug too, & the children rubbed noses over the head of the ^{little} Arab.

Then there were the kennels to be seen; Skelene; pet-honny, Bran, who kept eye & kept whines for joy & grief to see his mistress, but not to be able to break his chain right at her. There was a story to tell about him too. Now, the first

mild spring day after a very hard winter, nurse
 Gannal had taken the child, only two years old then,
 out on the terrace for an airing: others, before you
 could look round, or cry for help, a monstrous
 wolf sprang out of hiding, - how he had got inside
 the walls, nobody knew - & had the child between
 his paws in a twinkling. The nurse laid hold
 of his tail & screamed for help, but help would
 have come too late ^{had it not been that} ~~to save~~ ^{Bram} was at
 large for a run; he saw the danger, seized the
 wolf by the throat; the child was dropped with
 little hurt, & carried off by Gannal; & then followed
 a battle of which Bram ^{still} bore the marks in his
 one blind eye ~~that~~ ^{which} ~~came~~ ^{came} forever; but the
 wolf was left a bleeding carcass; & Bram had
 ever since been his little mistress's playmate
 & friend. This story too, Helena told as she
 had heard it from nurse Gannal; & then the
 two felt torn at much of the dog, until
 the old fellow began to behave quite foolishly
 under so much petting.

The next visit was one that Helena dared
 not - have paid alone. Though she knew there
 was no danger. Round the basement-floor
 of the keep was a row of cells, each railed
 off from the open space in front by immensely
 strong thick iron bars; these cells were the
 dens of wild beasts, most of them brought
 from over sea, & prized by Duke Noel as a very
 curious show for the guests who came to visit

visit him at Repergnons.

Now Helena had never ventured into the keep by herself. Even now she would have gone to seek her father or her father, but how could she show as a coward in Prince Reuelin's eyes? Besides, she was pretty sure that one ^{or more} of the keepers would be there on guard, & would follow them about from den to den. So into the keep they went, & down the steep stone staircases into the darkness, Reuelin not knowing where they were going, & wondering at the awful howls & cries, which the terrific roar that made both children shake in their shoes. Helena said not a word, & was very white, but all the time she thought, down at the bottom we shall find the keepers.

They stood still on the bottom step for a moment to get used to the darkness, for there was no light except what came down through the door which they had left open at the head of the staircase; unless you could call the green glare of many savage eyes shining like twin lamps out of the darkness every den, a light. But there was nothing at all outside the dens, not one of the keepers was there, for indeed, they only came amongst the beasts at feeding times.

Helena would have fled up the steps in her terror, prince's brave girl though she was; but she gave one glance at her companion's face which was so full of interest & delight that she was ashamed to show her fears.

The beasts seemed to have suspended their concert - phileons sounds in order that they might

Call to mind any wrong doing of his which could
taint this hideous shape.

"I could stand it better," said he. "if the hag would
only speak!"

But she never said a word, no more than if she
had been a deaf mute. For nine, and twenty days
she kept the warmth out of the sunshine & the pleasure
out of Karel's heart.

At last, on the thirtieth day, as the dusk was
leading in ^{rich} stranger guests through the halls
& chambers of his palace before they returned to
their own countries, a joyous sound of
rattling tones made everyone that heard it
shudder.

They were in the fair chamber built for the
Aster children, ~~where they came~~ & the sound
came from behind the ~~black~~ hangings. And
as the sky shivered all over with flowers & birds

All alone, the curtains came apart with a
loud Chshshsh, where the hag stood, ~~with~~
smoking at the end, shaking her long bony pro-
piger so close to his face that her claws & nail
scratched his cheeks.

"Ha! he! he! give him joy! give him joy!"
A haire shall he get.

But it won't be a boy,
And his ~~own~~ shall ~~be~~ hair!
Shall hair, he! he! shall hair!

And his bride he shall give
For the hair that shall live.

Ha! he! give him joy! have a care!
Give him joy, he! he! give him joy!"

At last she had spoken! And that was what she
wished into Karel's ear ~~with~~ in a voice like the
rattling